



DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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COMMUNITY SHOWS ITS APPRECIATION OF POUHALA MARSH WITH RESTORATION

HONOLULU - The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) and the Hawai'i Nature Center (HNC) are partnering to organize a community appreciation day on Saturday, November 15 at Pouhala Marsh, a 70-acre wildlife sanctuary located in Waipahu. The event will be from 8:30 a.m. until 12 noon.

Pouhala Marsh is the largest intact coastal wetland remaining in the Pearl Harbor basin of O'ahu. Community members will help to restore the health of the marsh by removing invasive species, planting trees, and participating in a stream clean-up.

Volunteers will pull pickle weed and California grass; two non-native species that encroach on the habitat of native plants.

The Pouhala stream bank and fence line will be planted with native *kou* and *milo* propagated at the DOFAW nursery in Makiki. Mulching and watering efforts will improve the health of previous planting sites. The DOFAW nursery staff are growing *loulu* palm and *hala* for future plantings at Pouhala.

"DLNR welcomes and appreciates the active involvement of organizations such as the Hawai'i Nature Center" said Laura H. Thielen, DLNR chairperson. "Public-private partnerships are making a significant difference when resources and talents can be combined to build rewarding and meaningful community stewardship of natural resources in our state."

The Hawai'i Nature Center recently received a grant from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), Coastal America program. With some of those funds, the Nature Center will be putting on two community work days at Pouhala Marsh. The center currently uses Pouhala Marsh as an educational site for teacher workshops and student field trips.

The wetlands of Pearl Harbor have been degraded through decades of filling and urban

development. The once extensive system of wetlands in the area has declined to a few remaining basins and mud flats. Pouhala Marsh is habitat for migratory birds and four endangered Hawaiian waterbirds, including the Hawaiian Stilt or ae ‘ o, (*Himantopus mexicanus knudseni*), Hawaiian Coot or ‘ alae ke ‘ oke ‘ o (*Fulica alai*), Hawaiian Moorhen or ‘ alae ‘ ula (*Gallinula chloropus sandvicensis*), and the Hawaiian Duck or koloa maoli (*Anas wyvilliana*).

“A visit to Pouhala Marsh provides community members with a hands-on education experience.” said Pauline Kawamata, TNC volunteer program manager. “These events help individuals to understand how critical wetland habitats are, and how important their work is in improving these environments.”

“We look at this community effort to restore Pouhala Marsh as a way to strengthen the Waipahu community’s ties with the land and each other” said Ati Jeffers-Fabro, Division of Forestry and Wildlife O ‘ ahu wetland coordinator. “This project is a win-win. We are building stewardship and reclaiming a unique natural and cultural asset – a wildlife sanctuary Waipahu can claim as its own.”

More than 50 people have signed up to participate in the event so far, including members of the Moanalua High School Interact Club, Waipahu High School Key Club, and the Navy’s Pearl Harbor - Ford Island group.

Volunteer coordinators are prepared for 100 participants. A light lunch will be provided.

Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to call Pauline Kawamata of the Hawai‘i Nature Center at (808) 955-0100, ext. 18. Volunteers may want to bring work gloves, water, hat, sunscreen, towel and change of clothes. Covered footwear and long pants are required.

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Images:

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Pickle weed : <http://hear.org/starr/plants/images/image/?q=050223-4264>
<http://hear.org/starr/plants/images/species/?q=batis+maritima>